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GETHSEMANE LUTHERAN CHURCH

1894 2004

HISTORY

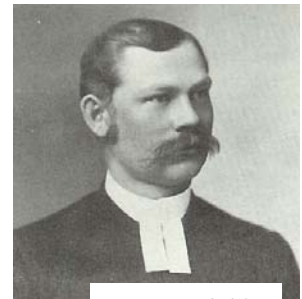
Written for The Messenger
By Beulah Mattson

In The Beginning

October was Gethsemane's anniversary month. 109 years ago on October 25, 1894, the following 28 adults became charter members of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Gethsemane Church:

Mr. Andrew Anderson	Mr. And Mrs. Lars Anderson
Mr. And Mrs. P.J. Gords	Mr. And Mrs. J.P. Johnson
Mr. And Mrs. F.O.L. Hennex	Mr. And Mrs. Andrew Hanson
Mr. And Mrs. C.A. Lindahl	Mr. And Mrs. C.G. Johnson
Mrs. And Mrs. C.G.H. Lindstrom	Mr. Eric Mattson
Miss Marie Moller (Mrs. A. Cederstrom)	Mr. And Mrs. P.A. Samuelson
Mr. W. F. Wallerstedt	Mrs. Marie Nelson
Mr. G.A. Quist	Mr. And Mrs. G.W. Swenson
Mr. And Mrs. Charles Johnson	

Brought together by their common language and cultural backgrounds, these Swedish immigrants had been meeting on an unorganized basis for several years. In 1892 the Augustana Synod began sending them student pastors. Under their direction, the Women's Organization and a choir were organized. After becoming chartered, the congregation continued meeting in rented halls until 1899, when they built their first chapel at California and Rutger Streets at a cost of \$2,001.02. The building included second floor quarters for the Pastor. The membership had by this time grown to 67 adults and 43 children.



C.A. Lindahl

At California and Rutger

Many people have expressed interest in learning more about Gethsemane's history, and we plan to continue giving you an article a month this year. We began last month with anniversary remembrances of the charter members and their beginning years. Of special interest is the fact that two of our present members are descendants of charter members. Mr. and Mrs. G.W. Swenson were grandparents of Ruth Johnson and great-grandparents of Barbara Johnson. Ruth's father, Arthur Swenson, was born into the church the year it was founded, 1894.

Last month we left our group, now 67 adults and 43 children, in 1899 in their first chapel at California and Rutger. All services were still being held in Swedish. A giant step was taken in 1900 when it was decided that one evening service a month would be in English. Four pastors came and went in the first 11 years, but Pastor C.J. Segerhammer brought stability after arriving in 1905. No one has come close to matching his tenure of 22 years. When he arrived, the congregation numbered 122 adults and 71 children. In 1909 they purchased a Presbyterian church at 3116 St. Vincent for \$12,000. In 1910 their first chapel was sold for \$4000, and the lot next to the new church was bought for \$1,000. The members built a parsonage on this lot at a cost of \$3,454. Later central heating was installed for \$125. The church basement was also enlarged, being dug out by hand by church members. In 1912 the first issue of "the Messenger" was issued, and it has continued to this day. More parish organizations were formed, among them the Brotherhood in 1915 and the Women's Missionary Society and the Junior Mission Band in 1923.

3116 St. Vincent

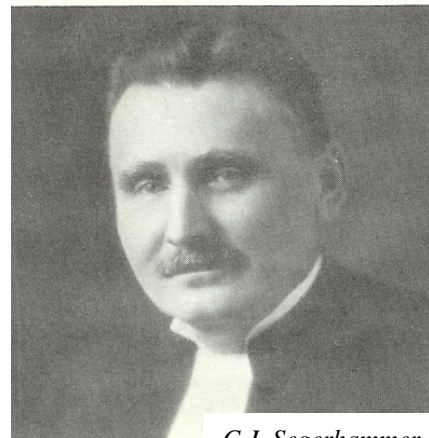
More notable events happened during Pastor Segerhammer's tenure. He apparently liked to write. In 1917 his book, "Gleanings from the Field," was published. His second book, "Ripples on the Deep," followed in 1922. Both were about his work in St. Louis, and proceeds from them contributed greatly to the reduction of Gethsemane's debt. By



Altar at 3116 St. Vincent Ave.

1924 the indebtedness had been eliminated. A pipe organ had been installed in 1915. In 1917 it was decided that the first two morning services each month would be

held in English. By 1924, all services were conducted in English. The Sunshine Club for young married couples and the Lindbergh Pioneer Club was founded in 1928 and 1929.

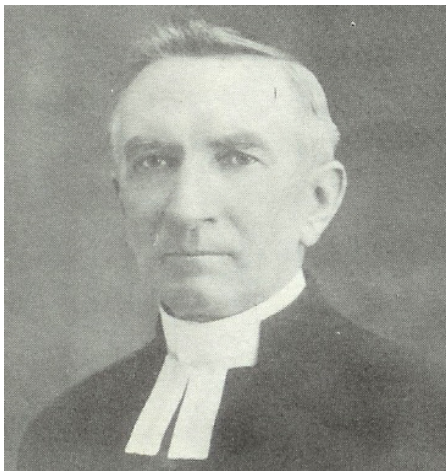


C.J. Segerhammer

1899 - 1929



The building at 3116 St. Vincent as it is today in the Gate District, surrounded by beautiful new and renovated homes.



J. A. Jacobson (1927-1931)



D. F. Engstrom (1935-1940)



S.E. Engstrom (1932-1935)

After Pastor Segerhammer's retirement in 1927, Pastor J.A. Jacobson assumed Gethsemane's pulpit and served until 1931. Following two interim pastors, the Rev. S.E. Engstrom began his ministry at Gethsemane in 1932. Despite the Depression, many improvements were made, including a new altar, sacristy, baptismal font, altar cloth and candelabra. This was also the time when the basement was enlarged by the members passing buckets of dirt out by hand. This increased the Sunday School and fellowship facilities. Pastor Engstrom was succeeded by his brother, the Rev. D. F. Engstrom in 1935. He served until 1940.

1929 - 1940

The Move to Hampton

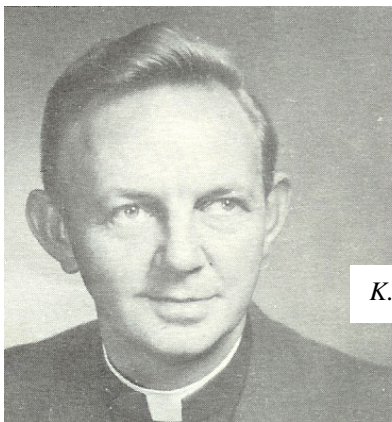
After the Engstrom brothers, in 1941 Pastor K. Luther Hedeem became our pastor. Instead of our usual narrative of facts and figures for that time, we decided to print the text of a letter recently sent to the council for their consideration when they are less busy with budgets, etc. The letter gives the history of our move to Hampton Avenue. In the next issue we shall report on other Gethsemane accomplishments for that period of time. The letter, which was signed by about 16 members follows:

To: The Gethsemane Church Council

The undersigned would like to make a proposal that the chapel in our educational unit be named "The Hedeem Chapel" in honor of Pastor K. Luther Hedeem. Without his vision and dedicated efforts, Gethsemane's relocation and building of our first unit would not have been possible.

Pastor Hedeem came to GLC, which was then located at 3112 St. Vincent Street, fresh from the seminary in Sept. 1941, with his bride, Marjorie Todd Hedeem. By 1943 he had inspired the congregation to establish the Greater Gethsemane Expansion Fund. In December 1944 the property on St. Vincent had been sold, and in January of 1945 a lot was bought on Hampton Avenue. Services were held at Mallinckrodt School from early 1945 until the church was dedicated on October 17, 1948. During this more than three-year period, the church office was the Hedeem's apartment on Chippewa. The neighbors wondered if they were counterfeiting money when they heard them mimeographing bulletins and Messengers late into the night.

This building was Pr. Hedeem's. He oversaw every detail and insisted that it be inspiring and beautiful, with stained glass windows by the noted artisan Emil Frei, wooden beams, and a meaningful mosaic over the door. When he died in 1953 of a brain tumor at the age of 38, he left a thriving congregation who loved him. Those of us who knew him feel that his name should be somewhere in the building which was his dream. The chapel is especially appropriate, and the time is right--in the 50th year since his death.



K. L. Hedeem (1941-1953)

His widow, Marjorie, lives in California and has serious health problems. It would mean a lot to her to know that he is still remembered and honored. She was a partner in all he did.

1941 - 1953

Pastor Hedeem's Legacy

In the last issue we chronicled the move from St. Vincent to Hampton and promised that this month we would report the other achievements of that period. The congregation grew from 245 members when the church building was dedicated in October of 1948, and by 1950 it became necessary to hold two Sunday morning services.



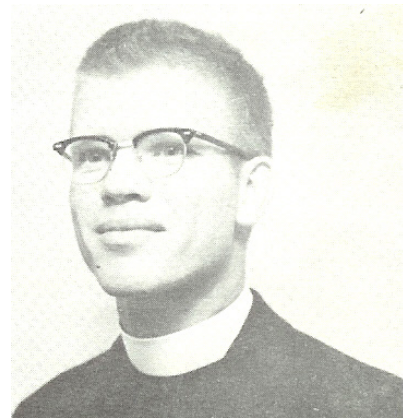
Original Sanctuary at Hampton and Persod

In 1951, upon petition to the Iowa Conference of the Augustana Lutheran Church, Gethsemane was released and transferred to the Illinois Conference. At that time the Women's Missionary Society and the Ladies' Aid merged to form one organization, the Women's Guild. It was divided into five circles, which held monthly meetings in addition to the monthly meetings of the Guild. Gethsemane became well-known for the large and elaborate smorgasbords which the women prepared annually. The Brotherhood (Men's Club) was also very active, not only holding monthly meetings but also doing community projects. A Young Adults club was organized and provided fellowship and fun.

After Pastor Hedeem's death in February of 1953, Pastor Arthur M. Holmer was called and was installed in September 1953. He was recommended by the Conference president as "one of most outstanding young ministers in the Augustana Church." Next month we shall cover the events of his time with us.

Gethsemane's Garden Grows

Following Pastor Hedeem's death and the interim leadership of Pastor Oscar Purn, Pastor Arthur M. Holmer arrived in September 1953 and became the first pastor to occupy the new parsonage at 6644 Winnebago, purchased for approximately \$18,000. Pastor Holmer's years with us were very fruitful.



A.M. Holmer (1953-1962)

The building of the first unit had cost \$76,000, and a \$43,000 loan had been taken out to pay for it. In 1954 a 25-month debt retirement drive was launched, and in 1956 the congregation was able to burn all mortgages; but the 8-year-old sanctuary was already considered too small for the growing congregation.

1951 - 1956

During the years that followed, a Couples Club was formed, a high school Bible Class was started, and an “Associates of Phillip and Andrew” evangelism program was carried on regularly every three months. For several years a congregational and synodical program making Bible Camp at Camp Augustana in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, reasonably available resulted in a busload of Gethsemane Luther Leaguers attending each year. During these years, the Augustana Order of Service was discontinued and the new Service Book and Hymnal was introduced.

In 1958 the congregation approved the recommendation of a study committee to build a new sanctuary, and the “Forward in Faith” building fund drive was launched and produced \$85,000 in three years. On October 16, 1960, ground was broken and the new sanctuary was dedicated on May 16, 1962. Attendance at the dedication service was 501; the membership totaled 505 adults and 160 children.



Pastor Holmer and The Junior Choir! Circa 1961

In 1962, the Augustana Synod was merged into a new national church body, the Lutheran Church of America, and Gethsemane became a member in the Illinois Synod of the LCA. Pastor Holmer resigned that same year.

Pastors of Our Own

After Pastor Holmer left in 1962, the Rev. Daniel Simondson, Lutheran Hospital chaplain, served as interim pastor until the 1963 installation of Pastor Edward Engdahl. Soon families of Gethsemane were holding “dialogue” with families from St. Joan of Arc, a midweek Bible Study was started, and the Altar Guild was reorganized for both study and service to the church. During the mid-sixties, three sons of Gethsemane were ordained: Donald Fagerberg, Robert Butler, and Ronald Hackmann.

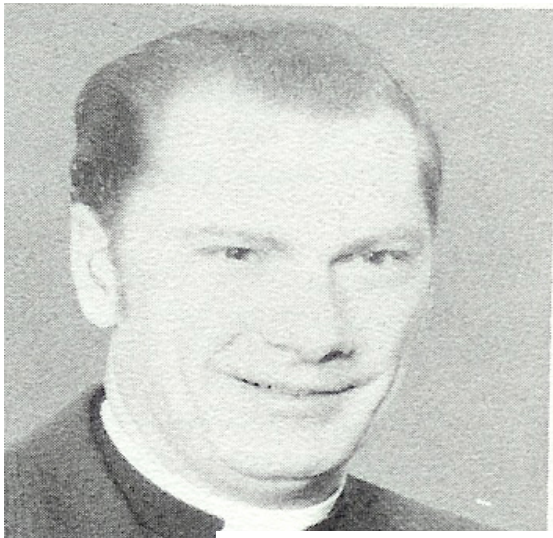


*E. H. Engdahl
(1963 – 1965)*

Reverend Engdahl resigned in 1965, and Pastors Arland Fiske and Leon Gilbertson filled Gethsemane’s pulpit until the arrival of Pastor Edward Hammer in September 1966. We retained a baptized membership of 553 and a confirmed membership of 469 during the pastorate of Pastor Hammer through 1965.

1956 - 1966

In those years an increase in our outreach and community involvement occurred. The "50 Plus Club" was started in 1971 and



E. W. Hammer (1966 – 1976)

welcomed many non-members of Gethsemane. A Vietnamese refugee family was adopted and supported for the 2 years they were in St. Louis. \$3,000 was given to World Hunger, and \$3,000 was given to the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. A men's fellowship breakfast and the first pictorial directory were introduced. A kitchenette was installed in the "old church." A larger parsonage was bought at 6559 Itaska. Conversation and concern shared with sister LCA churches resulted in the formation of the St. Louis Coalition. It was during Pastor Hammer's tenure that women were elected to the Church Council for the first time and girls could be acolytes. Pastor Hammer resigned in 1976 to accept a Synod position as Assistant to the President.

A Makeover

Rev. Kenneth Soderlund began his ministry in August 1976. During his pastorate, remodeling and refurbishing took place. The sanctuary was painted and red carpeting installed. The library, youth room, and nursery were carpeted and new furnishings added. \$4000 in individual contributions to a Remodeling Fund and designated memorial funds made these improvements cooling system was installed, and \$3000 was spent on storm windows. In 1978, a Sunday van program was initiated with volunteer drivers. The LCA conducted a direct appeal called Strength for Mission. Gethsemane's assignment of \$6300 was supported by \$16,700 in three-year pledges from 85 members. On October 6, 1979, the



K. Soderlund (1976 – 1982)

congregation officially established the Gethsemane Endowment Fund. In the early eighties, Gethsemane was a leader in the "barrier free" movement when we installed an elevator.

Pastor Soderlund resigned in November, 1982, and the Rev. William Q. Stickley, Jr. was installed as Gethsemane's thirteenth pastor in August, 1983.

1966 - 1983

The Church With the Sign Begins

During Pastor Stickley's pastorate, we began to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion at both services every week for the first time. Saturday evening services were tried for a time, Wednesday morning classes were initiated, and the Easter Vigil Service was established. Members were trained to serve as assisting ministers. A sign was erected on the front lawn for display of messages. Members raised \$100,000 to partition the first unit into classrooms and a chapel in addition to the library. The nursery was enlarged and improved, and a restroom for the disabled was added in the second unit. A recycling program and an annual blood drive were begun. The Gethsemane Lutheran Church Women began a Fall Crafts Bazaar, donating the proceeds to local and Lutheran charities. Gethsemane also offered Vacation Bible School as a cooperative effort with St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church. When Pastor Stickley resigned in 1987, church leaders sold the parsonage which had been bought for Pastor Hammer and invested the proceeds to provide a housing allowance for future pastors.



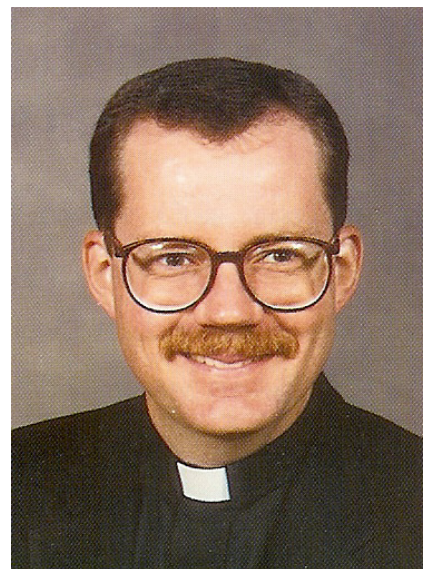
W. Q. Stickley (1983 – 191987)

On January 1, 1988, the LCA merged with the ALC and the AELC to form the ELCA, and Gethsemane took its place in the Missouri-Kansas Synod. A month later the church installed the Rev. Ronald T. Glusenkamp as pastor.

We Reach Out Beyond Our Comfort Zone

From the time of his installation in 1988, Pastor Ronald T. Glusenkamp involved Gethsemane in ministry to the community, beginning with the rehab of derelict houses for Lutheran Family and Children's Service. The congregation also began the financial and spiritual support of two missionaries in a remote village in Panama, helping to build a mission center, bridges, and aqueducts. Also, volunteers went to North Dakota to help rebuild after catastrophic floods.

Back in the local congregation, a parish nurse was added to the staff and a health cabinet formed. Joint worship services were held on Thanksgiving with St. Mark's Episcopal Church. They (and a real live donkey) also participate with us in a Palm Sunday procession on Hampton. Vacation Bible School was revived and became a great outreach



R.T. Glusenkamp (1987 – 1999)

1983 - 1988

program, reaching over 100 children each year. It was culminated by the ice cream social, an event begun by the Women's Guild during Pastor Hedeem's time with us 50 years ago. Beginning October 1994 a year-long celebration was held to commemorate our centennial.

GOD, YOU MADE THIS WORLD A GARDEN

Congregational Hymn of Gethsemane Lutheran Church, ELCA, Saint Louis, Missouri

Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1989

Kim S. Kolander, 1989

1. God, you made this world a gar - den, ev - ery har - vest
 2. Take us through that o - ther gar - den, tra - gic dark Geth -
 3. Now a u - ni - ver - sal gar - den, seed - ed with your
 4. In this cor - ner of your gar - den, plant - ed by a

4

bear - ing seed. Lov - ing God, to - day as ev - er you an - ti - ci -
 sem - a - ne, where our Sav - ior faced our fu - ture, set to win our
 liv - ing Word, grows with peace and love and beau - ty, songs of free - dom
 faith - ful few, we have thrived by their en - dea - vor, as you blessed them,

8

pate our need; you are rea - dy with your an - swer long be - fore we plead.
 am - nes - ty; Seed of wo - man, Seed of pro - mise from a bar - ren tree.
 there are heard; by your mer - cy, by your Spir - it, thank - ful hearts are stirred.
 bless us too. Find us, as you walk a - mong us, bear - ing fruit for You.

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HAMPTON AVENUE, 8.7.8.7.8.5.

1994

In 1995 the Tholozan House was purchased with the help of a \$55,000 donation, and the organ was upgraded. A Centennial Capital Funds drive was begun, and in 1996 a bid of over \$120,000 was approved for renovation of the sanctuary. Principal changes made were: moving the altar forward from the wall to a free-standing position, refinishing and relocating pews to allow for the baptismal font to be in the center of the church, replacing flooring, lighting, and carpeting, highlighting the cross with a new background, and removing walls to expose stained glass windows in the front of the sanctuary.

Pr. Glusenkamp's pastorate will be continued in the next issue.

And Into the 21st Century

Gethsemane became known as “the church with the sign” due to the witty sayings Pastor Glusenkamp installed each week on our sign. Many of them were quoted in the Post-Dispatch, and many visitors came out of curiosity because of them.



During this period, Mary Hellwig was employed as part-time pastoral assistant when Pastor Glusenkamp began working one day a week for the Synod, now called the Central States Synod. In 1998 Mary was ordained and called to be Gethsemane's first associate pastor with the help of another generous donation for that specific purpose. In February of 1999, Pastor Glusenkamp resigned to accept a position as ELCA pension outreach director in Minneapolis. Pastor Hellwig and the lay leadership kept the church flourishing during the interim period. For the first time, lay eucharistic ministers were commissioned to bring communion to homebound members. Pastor Leland Ogan, visitation pastor since 1988, continued to visit and serve communion to members at home until his death in 1999.



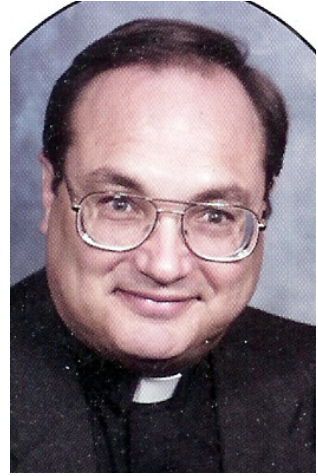
M. K. Hellwig (1998 – 2002)



L. Ogan (1988 – 1999)

1995 - 1999

In May of 2000, Pastor Michael Ide was called to serve as co-pastor with Pastor Hellwig, who was now part-time. Pastor Ide started popular weekly midweek Bible classes, and he emphasized fellowship events, especially for prospective members. He made many efforts to reach newcomers in the neighborhood. The fellowship hall was renovated, using a \$40,000 bequest from the estate of Walter Eckman which was designated for that purpose. In the spring of 2002, Pastor Mary resigned. In September of 2002, Pastor Ide resigned. At the present time, we are fortunate to have Pastor Richard Hoffman as interim pastor to guide us into our future life of Christian service, unity, and love.



M. Ide (2000 – 2002)

“SAYING THANKS”

During the past year, we have given you a bit of Gethsemane’s history each month. As we celebrate our 110th anniversary in October, we close the series by paying tribute to God’s faithful servants who came before us in the place. They gave us not only a beautiful building in which to worship and learn but also a tradition of lives of dedication, hard work and sacrifice as His servants here. In gratitude to them, both lay and clergy, we feel it is fitting to conclude with a listing of the pastors who served Gethsemane and the years they served.

C.A. Lindahl	1894-1896	J. F. Ahlin	1896-1899
C.J. Renhard	1899-1905	C.J. Segerhammer	1905-1927
J.A. Jacobson	1927-1931	S.E. Engstrom	1932-1935
D.F. Engstrom	1935-1940	K.L. Hedeem	1941-1953
A. M. Holmer	1953-1962	E.H. Engdahl	1963-1965
E. W. Hammer	1966-1976	K. Soderlund	1976-1982
W. Q. Stickley	1983-1987	R. T. Glusenkamp	1988-1999
M. K. Hellwig	1998-2002	M. Ide	2000-2002
Leland Ogan, visitation pastor	1988-1999		

2000 - 2004